

Food Insecurity and Hunger

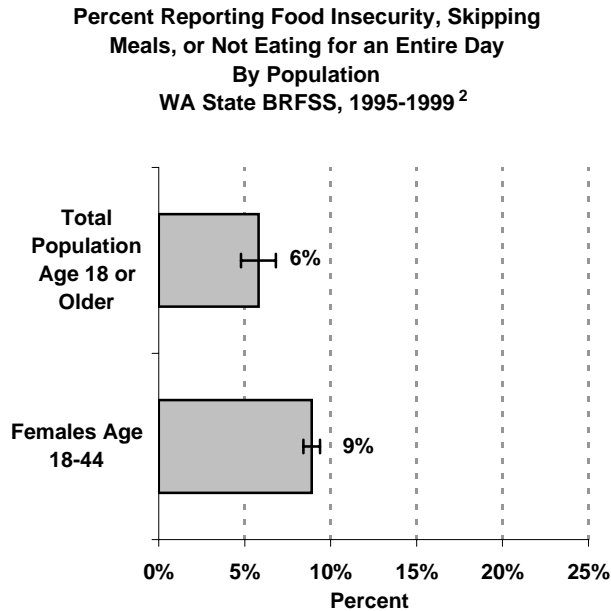
Definition: Food insecurity is the limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods, or limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable way. Hunger is the uneasy or painful sensation caused by a lack of food, and the recurrent and involuntary lack of access to food.

Key Findings

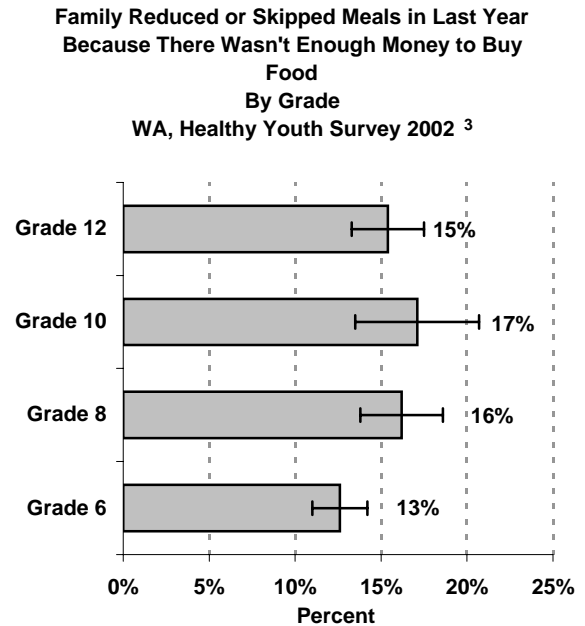
- ❖ According to data from the Current Population Survey, over the period of 1998-2000, an estimated 13% of Washington's households were food insecure, and an estimated 5% of households were food insecure with hunger, compared to about 11% of US households that were food insecure, and 3% that were food insecure with hunger. Washington State ranks second in the nation for food insecurity with hunger.¹
- ❖ In Washington, having a low income, being a non-white race, and having children is strongly associated with food insecurity and hunger.¹
- ❖ Based on 1995-99 survey data from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), Washington State adults over age 18 reported that in the 30 days before the survey: about 5% were concerned about having enough food, 3% skipped meals because there was not enough money to buy food, and 1% went without food for an entire day. Seven percent of women ages 18-44 reported they were concerned about having enough food, 5% skipped meals because there was not enough money to buy food, and 2% went without food for an entire day.²
- ❖ Data were not available on the food security of young children. However, some data on adolescents are available. In the 2002 Washington Healthy Youth Survey, about one in seven students reported that their family had reduced or skipped meals in the last 12 months because there was not enough money to buy food.³
- ❖ Health effects of hunger and food insecurity in children are associated with having more psychosocial problems, frequent colds, ear infections, anemia, asthma and frequent headaches.^{4,5}
- ❖ The Healthy People 2010 objective is to increase the prevalence of food security among US households to at least 94 percent of all households.⁶

Food Insecurity (cont.)

Gender and Age



Grade



Data Sources

- ¹ Sullivan, A., Choi, E. Hunger and Food Insecurity in the Fifty States: 1998--2000. Food Security Institute, Center on Hunger and Poverty, Heller School for Social Policy and Management, Brandeis University. August 2002.
- ² Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), Washington State Department of Health, 1995-1999
- ³ Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Department of Health, Department of Social and Health Services, and Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development and RMC Research Corporation. Washington State Healthy Youth Survey 2002: Analytic Report. In preparation.
- ⁴ Prevalence of Food Insecurity and Hunger, by State, 1996-1998. Food and Rural Economics Division, Economic Research Service, US Department of Agriculture. Food Assistance and Nutrition Research Report No.2. Sept 1999.
- ⁵ Olson, CM. Nutrition and health outcomes associated with food insecurity and hunger. J Nutr 1999; 129:521-24S.
- ⁶ Department of Health and Human Services (US). Healthy People 2010: Understanding and Improving Health. 2nd edition. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office; November 2000.

